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INFO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001566

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2026
TAGS: PGOV PNAT IZ
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT FORMATION UPDATE: MUCH SWIRLING,
      LITTLE PROGRESS

REF: BAGHDAD 1559 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: POL Couns Robert Ford, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: We still see no closure on the key
Interior, Defense and Finance ministry portfolios.
Tawafuq negotiator Ali Baban told Poloff on
May 10 that Tawafuq wanted the Planning, Education and
Health Ministries but has not yet received confirmation
that they will get them. He also said that Sheykh Khalaf
Alayan, as head of the National Dialogue Council, one of
the three parties in Tawafuq, may insist on a government
position. Iraqiya leaders met with their negotiating team
on May 11 in a meeting described as indecisive, tentative
and uneasy. Amid allegations that some Iraqiya List
leaders were negotiating separate agreements with the Shia
for government positions, Iraqiya negotiator Hussein
Sha'alan told PolFSN on May 11 that leaders of the Iraqiya
list would stand with Ayad Allawi until they see what
ministries are offered to them. KDP member and possible
Kurd Ministry of Industry nominee Fawzi Hariri told Poloff
May 11 that he was not qualified for the position and would
prefer Transportation or Construction and Housing.
Christian leader Yonadam Kanna blustered to Poloff on May
11 that Iraqi Christians in the US would stage
demonstrations to protest what he termed the lockout of
Christians from the Iraqi government. Kanna believed that
his one seat in the parliament entitled his party to a
ministerial slot in the government. End Summary.

Tawafuq Firm on Desired Ministries

¶2. (C) Tawafuq Front ministerial negotiator Ali Baban told
Poloff on May 10 evening that Tawafuq continued to insist
that it be awarded the Planning, Education and Health
Ministries. Baban said that he was the proposed candidate
for the Planning Ministry and that President Talabani sent
a letter to Prime Minister-designate Maliki late May 10
supporting the nomination. Tawafuq was nominating Dr.
Rafia'a al-Eesawee for the Health Ministry, said Baban. He
said that Tawafuq proposed several names for the Education
Ministry. He characterized Tawafuq's nomination of Sheykh
Khalaf Alayan for Defense as a political ploy to placate
one of the leaders of the Front. Poloff asked whether
Alayan was not placated with Mahmud Mashadani's election to
the position of parliament Speaker - the most senior
Tawafuq political appointment, since both Alayan and
Mashadani came from the Front's National Dialogue Council
group. Baban responded that Alayan may still seek some
type of appointment for himself. Baban complained about
that there were lots of problems working with Iraqiya as
its leaders were breaking away and attempting to negotiate
separate deals with the Shia.

Iraqiya tentative as ever

¶3. (C) On May 11, one of Iraqiya's three-man negotiating
team, Sheykh Hussein Ali Sha'alan, told PolFSN that the
Iraqiya list had met that morning to discuss what
candidates to put forth for which ministries. Instead,
Sha'alan described the meeting as indecisive, tentative and
uneasy. Sha'alan reported that Adnan Pachachi continued to
complain about losing out to Tawafuq on the deputy
premiership while other members complained that the
negotiating team was not doing its job. Sha'alan argued
that the Shia Coalition keeps changing the distribution,
making it difficult to make counter offers. The members
looked to Ayad Allawi to lead the bloc in deciding which
cabinet positions to pursue. In the end, the group agreed
to wait and see what the Shia Coalition would be willing to
give Iraqiya. Sha'alan downplayed rumors that the Shia
Coalition has been lobbying various Shia members to leave
Iraqiya, but did not discount the possibility. He said,
"Until we know what we get, we will stand with Allawi."

KDP to work for PUK ?

¶4. (C) On May 11, KDP member Fawzi Hariri told PolOff that
he was not particularly pleased that the Kurdish leadership
may secure for him the next Minister of Industry position.
He admitted that he does not have the qualifications to run
this ministry. Knowing that the Shia Coalition is unlikely
to relinquish the Transportation ministry, Hariri said he
would pursue securing the Ministry of Construction and

Housing where he thought he has better qualifications.
Otherwise, he claimed that he would resign his post as
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chief of Staff and ask for a
position working for PUK Deputy Prime Minister nominee
Barham Salih.

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Christian Leader Unhappy - Claims Ministry Entitlement
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¶5. (C) Leader of the Assyrian Christian group Yonadam Kanna
complained forcefully to Poloff on May 11 that the Kurds
were locking the Christians out the government. He
demanded that the Embassy insist that he, as the
representative of Iraqi Minorities Council, be the one who
nominated the "Christian" minister. He claimed that the
Christian community in the US was incensed because the
reputed token Christian, Fawzi Hariri, had never been
connected with the Christian political movement in Iraq.
Christians in the US would organize protest
demonstrations, he blustered. Kanna told Poloff that the
Christians were entitled to a Ministry based on the
constitutional requirement that minorities be represented
in government. Poloff suggested that Kanna negotiate
Christian participation in government with PM-designate
Maliki or with the Kurds, arguing that one parliamentary
seat did not necessary entitle his party to a ministry.
Poloff continued that if the Kurds agreed to use one of
their ministerial slots to appoint a Christian, Kanna could
take advantage of this to argue with the Kurds that he, as
representative of the Iraqi Minority Council, should be
consulted on the nomination.
KHALILZAD